Southwark
April 19th 1792.
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SOUTHWARK, April 19, 1792.

At a MEETING held at the Three Tuns Tavern,

Mr. SAMUEL FAVELL in the Chair,

Reſolved,

"That a Society be formed in Southwark for the cultivation and diffuſion of Political Knowledge.

Reſolved,

That the Society be denominated "THE FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE."

Reſolved,

That the following be the DECLARATION of this Society.

"CONSIDERING that ignorance, forgetfulneſs, or contempt of the RIGHTS OF MEN are the ſole cauſes of public grievances, and of the corruption of Government;" this Society, formed for the purpoſe of inveſtigating and aſſerting thoſe Rights, and of uniting their efforts, with thoſe of their fellow Citizens, for correcting national abuſes, and reſtraining exorbitant and unneceſſary Taxation, do hereby declare—

1ſt. That the great end of civil ſociety is GENERAL HAPPINESS.

2nd. That NO FORM OF GOVERNMENT is good, any further than it ſecures that object.

3rd. That all Civil and Political Authority is derived from the people.

4th. That equal active Citizenſhip is the unalienable right of all Men: Minors, Criminals, and Inſane Perſons excepted.

5th. That

5th. That the exercise of that right in appointing an adequate REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT is the wisest device of human policy, and the only security of NATIONAL FREEDOM.

We also declare, that we are wearied with the unmeaning names of WHIG and TORY, and of MINISTERIAL and OPPOSITIONAL parties, and having often—too often, been deceived by both, we can no longer implicitly confide in either. We will THINK for ourselves; we will study our own Rights; and we leave to the INS and the OUTS all that idle quibble of debate which only serves to amuse and deceive the nation, and to hold it alternately the prey of COURT and PARTY INTRIGUES.

We have beheld corruption generated upon corruption under the auspices of every Administration; from whence we have reason to infer, that some RADICAL DEFECT exists in the system of Government, that admits of no cure but from the United efforts of the Nation.

We have seen Taxes multiplied upon Taxes, for purposes unknown to us, at the mere will and pleasure of the party in power; and we have seen PARLIAMENTS refuse to know the cause for which such Taxes were voted. Thus held in the dark by every part of Government, our money taken from us without assigning a cause, and ourselves continually deceived, we have learned from experience the necessity of looking into our own Rights, and of attending to our own Interest.

We are told that we have a Constitution—If it permits these abuses, it is either *not* a good one, or good *only in part*, and defective in its principles, construction, and effects. The continual applause bestowed upon it by Placemen, Pensioners, Government Contractors, Court Expectants, and the hired Editors of Prostituted Newspapers, has justly excited our suspicion either of its excellence or its existence. It may be good for THEM and not for us: and as we are no longer to be amused with a *Name* or a *Phantom*, we will direct our enquiries to the fact.

We contemplate with pleasure the progress which this Nation and Mankind in general are now making in the hi-

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therto myſterious ſcience of Government. We obſerve a ſpirit of calm and rational enquiry riſing and diffuſing itſelf among all orders of people; and of a nature totally different from the tumultuous malevolence of Party, and the artificial policy of Stateſmen.

We are deſirous, therefore, of uniting with the ſeveral ſocieties already formed in various parts of the nation, for promoting an enquiry into, and aſſerting the Rights of the People. We call upon our fellow Citizens of all deſcriptions to inſtitute ſimilar ſocieties, for the ſame great purpoſe; and we recommend a general correſpondence with each other, and with the Society for CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION at LONDON, as the beſt means of cementing the common union, and of directing our united efforts with greater energy and effect.

Reſolved,

That the following be the Rules of the Society.

I. The number of Members ſhall be unlimited, and each ſubſcribe not leſs than 1*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, for the purpoſe of carrying on the deſigns of the inſtitution.

II. The Society ſhall meet in ſmall parties, or diviſions, monthly, on any day of the firſt week of the month, except Tueſday; and when any diviſion amounts to thirty Members, it ſhall be ſubdivided and form two.

III. Each diviſion to elect a Chairman and Secretary quarterly, and at the firſt meeting of the quarter. The Chairman to be their Repreſentative in a General Committee; and in caſe the diviſion ſhall conſiſt of twenty perſons, another Repreſentative ſhall be choſen to accompany the Chairman. The Secretary ſhall record the tranſactions, and deliver quarterly to the General Committee a correct liſt of the Members of ſuch diviſion, collect the ſubſcriptions, and pay them forthwith to the Treaſurer of the Society.

IV. The

IV. The Repreſentatives ſhall form a General Committee—meet every Tueſday—and at their firſt meeting in each quarter elect a Chairman and principal Secretary. They ſhall correſpond with ſimilar inſtitutions—determine on all publications to be circulated by the Society—report to their reſpective diviſions the proceedings and correſpondence of the Committee—and in all caſes be governed by the prevailing ſentiments of their conſtituents.

V. The Chairman of the General Committee ſhall be Treaſurer for the time being—receive the ſubſcriptions—pay all diſburſements under the direction of the Committee—and have his accounts audited by the next ſucceeding Committee.

VI. Every diviſion ſhall determine within itſelf on the mode of admitting Members, and all other matters not provided for in the foregoing articles.

A. C. RUSSELL, Sec.

The Committee appointed to carry the above Plan into execution, invite the Friends of Freedom reſident in Southwark and its environs, to form immediate Aſſociations in their reſpective neighbourhoods; and either as Diviſions, or as independent Bodies, to communicate with the General Committee of this Society. The Committee alſo inform them, that a General Meeting of this Society will be held at the Three Tuns Tavern, Saint Margaret's-Hill, on Tueſday, May 8th next, preciſely at 7 o'Clock in the Evening, where the Company of every Friend to the Inſtitution will be deemed a favour.

Southwark, April 25, 1792.